

STATE WAIVER REQUEST

1. **Waiver Serial Number (if applicable):** 2150035
2. **Type of request:** Initial
3. **Statutory citation:** Section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008
4. **Regulatory citation:** 7 CFR 273.24
5. **State:** Rhode Island
6. **Region:** NERO
7. **Regulatory requirements:** Section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended, provides that no able-bodied adult without dependents (ABAWD) shall be eligible to participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) as a member of any household if the individual received program benefits for more than 3 months during any 3-year period in which the individual was subject to but did not comply with the ABAWD work requirement. Section 6(o) also provides that, upon the request of the State agency, the Secretary may waive the applicability of the 3-month ABAWD time limit for any group of individuals in the State if the Secretary makes a determination that the area in which the individuals reside has an unemployment rate of over 10 percent, or does not have a sufficient number of jobs to provide employment for the individuals.
8. **Description of alternative procedures:** The State of Rhode Island is requesting to exempt able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) in 23 towns from SNAP time limits at 7 CFR 273.24.
9. **Justification for request:** Under SNAP regulations at 7 CFR 273.24(f)(2), areas may support a claim of insufficient jobs by submitting evidence that an area has an average unemployment rate for a 24-month period that exceeds the national average for the same 24-month period by 20 percent. 7 CFR 273.24(f)(6) provides that States may define areas to be waived.

The State of Rhode Island seeks a waiver for two individual towns, based on their average unemployment rates for the 24-month period of January 2020 to December 2021. During this time, the national average for unemployment was 6.7 percent; 20 percent above this was 8.0 percent. The average unemployment rates for these towns were each above 8.0 percent.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data January 2020 to December 2021
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Individual towns	Unemployed Total	Labor Force Total	Unemployment Rate
New Shoreham town	1,881	18,452	10.2%
Westerly town	22,661	267,826	8.5%
20% Above National Average Threshold	8.0%		

The State of Rhode Island also seeks a waiver for 21 towns in the Providence-Warwick, RI-MA New England City and Town Area (NECTA), based on this region's unemployment rate for the 24-month period of January 2020 to December 2021. This NECTA used in this waiver request is defined by the Census Bureau.¹ The combined average unemployment rate for the towns in this NECTA was 8.0 percent.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data January 2020 to December 2021		
Providence-Warwick, RI-MA NECTA, RI part	Unemployed Total	Labor Force Total
Burrillville town	15,222	226,153
Central Falls city	20,273	213,549
Charlestown town	8,091	101,713
Cranston city	77,964	1,023,356
Cumberland town	30,300	488,048
East Greenwich town	11,539	169,108
East Providence city	46,041	597,779
Foster town	4,769	70,548
Glocester town	7,700	150,705
Johnston town	30,973	389,781
Lincoln town	20,194	307,660
North Providence town	35,139	446,962
North Smithfield town	10,231	170,868
Pawtucket city	80,423	905,584
Providence city	191,636	2,144,506
Scituate town	10,802	153,980
Smithfield town	17,913	280,380
Warren town	10,228	139,481

¹ A map of NECTAs is available from the Census Bureau: <https://www.census.gov/geographies/reference-maps/2020/geo/nectas.html>. This NECTA is treated as an economic region, enabling the towns to be grouped non-contiguously, in accordance with Section VI of FNS guide on calculating waiver requests (<https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/snap-2021-guide-supporting-abawd-time-limit-waiver-requests.pdf>).

West Greenwich town	5,672	82,429
West Warwick town	31,035	400,157
Woonsocket city	44,772	473,165
Combined Area Unemployment Rate	8.0%	
20% Above National Average Threshold	8.0%	

10. Anticipated impact on households and State agency operations:

This waiver will provide consistency for households and State agency operations in areas where unemployment remains higher than the national average.

11. Caseload information, including percent, characteristics, and quality control error rate for affection portion (if applicable):

The caseload for these areas, as of 3/3/2023, represent 80.49% of the entire caseload for the state. There are no quality control procedures involved.

12. Anticipated implementation date and time period for which waiver is needed:

The State is requesting a one-year waiver, from July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024.

13. Proposed quality control review procedures:

There are no special quality control procedures needed in conjunction with this waiver.

14. State agency submitting waiver request and State contact person: RI- Bethany Caputo, SNAP Administrator

15. Signature and title of requesting official:



Name/Title: Bethany Caputo, SNAP Administrator

Email for transmission of response: Bethany.caputo@dhs.ri.gov

16. Date of request: 3/6/2023

17. State agency staff contact (name/email/telephone): Bethany Caputo;
Bethany.caputo@dhs.ri.gov (401)309-1237

18. Regional office contact person (to be completed by FNS regional office):